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United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

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Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

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Letter of transmittal

[6 October 2010]

Mr. Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution 64/16 of 2 December 2009.

The report covers the period from 7 October 2009 to 6 October 2010.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) Paul **Badji**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I
Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly[1] were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,[2] the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The recommendations of the Committee contained in its first report could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee has consistently supported a peaceful solution of the question of Palestine. It welcomed the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference that launched the Middle East peace process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It also welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) and subsequent implementation agreements. The Committee has strongly supported the objective of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The Committee welcomed and supported the Quartet's road map and called on the parties to implement it. In keeping with its mandate, the Committee has continued to work towards creating conditions for the successful conduct and conclusion of the negotiations on a permanent settlement allowing the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights. The Committee has also promoted support and assistance by the international community to the Palestinian people.

4. The reporting period has been characterized by efforts to resume negotiations between the parties on all permanent status issues, a volatile situation on the ground throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the continued division between the political leadership in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Of special concern was the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, exacerbated by the continued imposition by Israel of a severe blockade on the territory, which has obstructed the movement of persons and goods, including

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/31/35).

[2] Since the thirty-first session, the Committee has submitted annual reports to the General Assembly; all such reports have been issued as supplement No. 35 of the sessional documentation of the Assembly.

humanitarian access and the import of materials required for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Gaza and other essential supplies.

5. Systematic engagement by the Quartet and its individual members, in particular the United States of America, with the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships and other stakeholders in the region, led to the resumption of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians on 2 September 2010. That had been preceded by several rounds of proximity talks assisted by the United States. The League of Arab States also engaged actively with the parties and the Quartet within the framework of the Arab Peace Initiative.

6. The situation in the Gaza Strip remained bleak, with 1.5 million inhabitants still suffering from the aftermath of the Israeli military assault of December 2008-January 2009, an acute shortage of basic goods and services, including clean water, and economic activity stifled by the blockade. Efforts by the international community, in particular the United Nations, to ease the blockade had only a limited effect. Civil society organizations mobilized ship convoys to break the siege, which were either prevented through the diplomatic efforts of Israel, or intercepted by its navy. On 31 May 2010, Israeli forces attacked, in international waters, a multinational humanitarian aid convoy sailing to Gaza. That military assault, in violation of international law, left nine Turkish civilians dead and many more wounded. It triggered an immediate condemnation by the international community, including the Security Council, and led to national and international investigations. The Human Rights Council dispatched an international independent fact-finding mission, and the Secretary-General established a Panel of Inquiry. At the same time, the international debate was continuing with regard to ensuring accountability and justice for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed during the Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip, in particular the follow-up of the very specific conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza conflict, established by the Human Rights Council and led by Justice Richard Goldstone (A/HRC/12/48).

7. Throughout the year, Israel conducted limited military operations in the Gaza Strip, resulting in Palestinian casualties. This was met with resumed rocket and mortar fire by armed Palestinian groups into southern Israel. In addition, Israeli military incursions into West Bank population centres continued, often accompanied by the arrests of Palestinians. The expansion of Israeli settlements continued in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as did the construction of the wall. The number of checkpoints was only marginally reduced. The situation in Occupied East Jerusalem deteriorated further, with ongoing land confiscations, house demolitions and evictions of Palestinian residents, and the transfer of more Israeli settlers into the City.

8. The divide among major Palestinian factions continued to affect the lives of ordinary Palestinians, especially in Gaza, and prevented Palestinians from uniting in support of the Palestinian Authority. Yet, in spite of the challenges presented by the occupation, the Palestinian Authority was able in the past year to make appreciable progress in economic development and State-building through the phased implementation of a plan entitled "Palestine: Ending the Occupation, establishing the State" (Fayyad Plan), which has received widespread international support.

9. The activities of the Committee and its Bureau in the reporting period focused on the need to end the Israeli occupation and to establish a sovereign and

independent Palestinian State. The Committee monitored the situation on the ground and the political developments, implemented its programme of international meetings and conferences, held a number of consultations with representatives of Governments, national parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations, as well as civil society, and reached out to its partners worldwide using new communications media. The Committee reiterated its position of principle that a permanent settlement of the question of Palestine could only be achieved through ending the occupation, establishing a Palestinian State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just and agreed solution to the Palestine refugees issue on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The first international meeting of the Committee in February 2010 engaged parliamentarians of the Mediterranean region and beyond in support of the two-State solution. It was followed by a seminar promoting international support of the Fayyad Plan. At another meeting held in May, participants emphasized the urgency to implement the two-State solution, cautioning that the continuation of the Israeli policy of illegally and unilaterally imposing faits accomplis on the ground posed a grave threat to the prospects of a negotiated solution of the conflict. The fourth event focused on the situation in East Jerusalem and its significance for a just peace in the Middle East. The Committee encouraged all stakeholders to support the role and activities of the United Nations and urged them to support the two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map.

Chapter II
Mandate of the Committee

10. On 2 December 2009, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see resolution 64/16), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (see resolution 64/17) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (see resolution 64/18). On the same date, the Assembly adopted resolution 64/19, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

Chapter III
Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

11. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

12. The observers at the Committee meetings are: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.

13. At its 321st meeting, on 21 January 2010, the Committee re-elected Paul Badji (Senegal) as Chair, Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan) and Pedro Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) as Vice-Chair and Saviour F. Borg (Malta) as Rapporteur.

14. Also at the 321st meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2010 (see A/AC.183/2010/1).

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

15. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all United Nations Member States and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

Chapter IV
Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

16. After a long break in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, the United States, in early May 2010, facilitated indirect talks between the parties. After seven rounds of proximity talks, the parties agreed to enter into direct negotiations on permanent status issues. On 2 September, in Washington, D.C., delegations led by the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, held the first bilateral talks in some 20 months, followed by a second round of talks, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, and Jerusalem on 14 and 15 September. An Israeli moratorium on settlement construction ended on 26 September, which was met by broad criticism and endangered the continuation of the talks. The United States, supported by Egypt, Jordan and the European Union, intensified efforts aimed at convincing the Government of Israel to renew the moratorium.

17. The situation on the ground remained a cause of serious concern. Israeli forces continued to conduct routine military raids and arrests throughout the West Bank. During the reporting period (as at 28 September), 14 Palestinians were killed and more than 1,000 injured by Israeli forces in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including during clashes between demonstrators and Israeli forces. Two members of the Israeli forces and five Israeli settlers were killed by Palestinians, and some 140 soldiers and policemen were injured during the reporting period. Over 2,300 Palestinians were arrested during some 4,000 search operations conducted by Israeli forces. In the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces killed 57 Palestinians, including 23 civilians, and injured more than 210 Palestinians, including at least 177 civilians, in incidents involving air strikes and the enforcement of access restrictions near the border fence. Three Israeli soldiers were killed and eight soldiers were injured during clashes with Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel. One foreign worker was killed in southern Israel by a rocket launched by Palestinians in Gaza. The Israeli military reported that, as of September, 150 projectiles had been fired at Israel since the beginning of 2010.

18. In a worrisome development, the Israeli military issued a new order on 13 April, defining any person present in the West Bank without a permit issued by the Israeli military commander as an "infiltrator" who had committed a criminal offence and could be deported within 72 hours without judicial review. This new order puts at risk thousands of Palestinians living in the West Bank whose home addresses, as recorded in the population registry, are in Gaza, as well as people born in the West Bank or abroad who, for various reasons, do not have residency cards. However, owing to the ambiguity of the language of the order, it could potentially be applied to a much broader category of residents. In implementation of the new policy, several Palestinians have been deported to Gaza after being released from Israeli jails.

19. On numerous occasions, Israeli forces penetrated a few hundred metres within the Gaza Strip and withdrew shortly after conducting land-levelling operations. Such incidents occurred in the context of Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to areas along the border fence. Similar restrictions were applied on access to fishing areas near shore. In many incidents, Israeli naval forces opened fire on Palestinian fishing boats, forcing them ashore, and, in several cases, wounding fishermen and damaging their boats. Three Palestinian fishermen have been killed and five others

injured in 2010 (as of September). Since late 2008, Palestinians have been totally or partially prevented from accessing land located up to 1,000 metres to 1,500 metres from the Green Line, and sea areas beyond three nautical miles from shore. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated the restricted area at 17 per cent of the total land mass of the Gaza Strip and 35 per cent of its agricultural land. At sea, fishermen were totally prevented from accessing some 85 per cent of the maritime areas to which they were entitled according to the Oslo Agreements. An estimated 178,000 people — 12 per cent of the population of Gaza — were directly affected by this regime, with approximately 113,000 affected in land areas and 65,000 affected by restrictions on access to maritime areas.

20. Access restrictions in those areas were primarily enforced by live fire on people attempting to enter the areas. While in most cases it was "warning shots" that forced people to stay away from the area, the Israeli army since the end of the Cast Lead offensive in January 2009, has killed at least 22 civilians and injured more than 150 in these circumstances. Despite the potential for civilian casualties, the Israeli authorities have not informed the affected population about the precise boundaries of the restricted areas and the conditions under which access to those areas might be permitted or denied.

21. Another method used by the Israeli military to prevent access was the systematic levelling of farm land and the destruction of other private property located in the restricted areas. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs conservatively estimated the value of agricultural and other property destroyed in the past five years in those areas at $308 million. It has been further estimated that access restrictions and the related destruction of agricultural assets resulted in a yearly loss of approximately 75,000 metric tons of potential produce, conservatively estimated at $50.2 million a year. In the fishing sector, the potential fishing catch lost as a result of access restrictions was estimated at approximately 7,000 metric tons, with a related loss of income of some $26.5 million over a period of five years. The erosion of livelihoods has forced affected families to develop a variety of coping mechanisms aimed at generating alternative income and reducing expenditure. Some of the practices raising significant concerns include a reduction in the quantity of food consumed; a gradual shift in diets (from vegetables and animal products to low-cost and high-carbohydrate items); a reduction in the length of school enrolment for children; and an increased inclination on the part of parents to marry off their daughters at an earlier age.

22. These access restrictions in Gaza, together with Israel's continued obstruction of the import of essential construction materials and spare parts, have significantly impeded the maintenance and upgrade of the existing infrastructure for wastewater and electricity, negatively impacting the provision of services to the entire population of Gaza. In particular, the prolonged delay in the construction of three wastewater treatment plants has contributed to the daily release of some 80 million litres of raw and partially treated sewage into the sea and streams, constituting a significant environmental and health hazard.

23. Reconstruction in Gaza has been nearly impossible owing to the blockade imposed by Israel. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported in May 2010 that, more than one year after the Israeli offensive, three quarters of the damage inflicted on buildings and infrastructure remained unrepaired. Nearly none of the 3,425 homes destroyed during the operation had been reconstructed, resulting

in the displacement of approximately 20,000 people. Only 17.5 per cent of the value of the damage caused to educational facilities had been repaired, putting an extra strain on Gaza's already stressed education system. Only half of the damage to the power network had been repaired, and no repair had been made to the transport infrastructure. A quarter of damaged farmland had been rehabilitated and only 40 per cent of private businesses had been repaired.

24. On 31 May, Israeli naval commando forces, operating in international waters, intercepted the "Free Gaza" flotilla of six ships carrying international activists and humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. During the takeover of one of the vessels, the *Mavi Marmara*, nine Turkish nationals, including one with dual United States citizenship, were killed by Israeli soldiers and many others were wounded. The Israeli assault was widely condemned by the international community. At the end of an emergency meeting, the Security Council on 1 June issued a presidential statement condemning these acts and calling for "a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards" (see/PRST/2010/9).

25. On 14 June, the Israeli Cabinet approved the establishment of the Israeli Public Commission to Examine the Maritime Incident of 31 May 2010, headed by retired Israeli Supreme Court Justice Jacob Turkel, in addition to a military investigation headed by General Eiland. On 2 June, the United Nations Human Rights Council decided to dispatch an independent international fact-finding mission to investigate violations of international law resulting from the attacks on the flotilla. The mission issued its report (A/HRC/15/21) on 22 September, concluding that a series of violations of international law had been committed by Israeli forces. The conclusions contained in the report were endorsed by the Human Rights Council on 29 September. On 2 August, the Secretary-General announced the launch of a Panel of Inquiry on the Flotilla incident that occurred on 31 May 2010, led by Geoffrey Palmer, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand. The Panel submitted its initial progress report to the Secretary-General on 15 September.

26. On 20 June, under international pressure, the Government of Israel announced a decision to ease the blockade on Gaza, which has been imposed for over three years since 2007. On 5 July, the Government of Israel switched from a "positive" list of goods allowed into Gaza to a "negative" list of items that would be prohibited or restricted from entry. Among the items prohibited or restricted are fertilizers, glass-fibre-based raw materials, drilling equipment, vessels and water disinfectants, as well as 19 types of construction materials (to be limited to projects under international supervision), including cement, gravel, concrete blocks, steel elements, asphalt, sealing materials and construction vehicles.

27. Despite the increase in imports into Gaza under the new measures, they remained far below the weekly average of truckloads delivered before the institution of the closure regime in 2007, thereby impeding the reconstruction of homes and infrastructure and limiting the scope of economic reactivation. A lack of industrial fuel supplied to the Gaza power plant continued to result in power outages of between four to six hours per day (as of September), affecting the daily life of residents, as well as the provision of essential services, including water supply, sewage treatment and removal. Power cuts also forced hospitals to suspend or postpone elective surgery, diagnostic procedures and supportive services, and sensitive medical equipment was regularly damaged as a result of the cuts. Access to

medical facilities in the West Bank, Israel and Jordan continued to be limited by a restrictive permit regime implemented by the Israeli authorities.

28. Residents of Gaza continued to rely on goods smuggled through the tunnels under the border with Egypt. During the reporting period, 49 Palestinians, including 2 children, were killed and 104 injured in tunnel-related incidents, including Israeli air strikes, tunnel collapses, electrocution and the explosion of gas cylinders.

29. On 15 January, an arrangement was made whereby the Government of Israel made a payment of $10.5 million to the United Nations in respect of losses caused by Israel to United Nations facilities in Gaza during the Israeli military assault of December 2008 to January 2009 in the nine incidents investigated by the Gaza Board of Inquiry established by the Secretary-General. In the light of that payment, the United Nations has agreed that the financial issues relating to those incidents had been brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

30. During the reporting period, Israel continued illegal settlement activities in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. On 25 November 2009, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu declared a 10-month "partial moratorium" on new construction in settlements in the West Bank in order to encourage the resumption of talks with the Palestinians. The moratorium was not applied to East Jerusalem, where settlement construction continued throughout the reporting period. The organization Peace Now, which monitors Israeli settlements, reported in August 2010 that at least 600 housing units had started to be built during the moratorium in over 60 settlements, at least 492 of those in direct violation of the moratorium. Peace Now also reported that some 2,000 housing units were currently under construction, most of which had started before the announcement of the moratorium. Hours after the expiration of the moratorium on 26 September, construction work resumed in many settlements. According to a report by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, for the year 2009, the number of settlements in the West Bank totalled 144, the majority located in the Jerusalem area, and the number of settlers reached 517,774 by the end of 2009, the majority living in the Jerusalem area.

31. Of critical concern was settlement activity in Occupied East Jerusalem, as well as acts aimed at displacing and expelling Palestinian residents from the City through house demolitions, evictions and revocations of residency rights. Efforts by Israelis to settle in Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem have intensified and have often been accompanied by attempts to forcibly evict Palestinian families. Among the methods used have been "reclamation of property" allegedly owned by Jewish residents of pre-1948 Mandatory Palestine, and controversial purchases of Palestinian property. Moreover, the Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, including the Orient House and the Chamber of Commerce, remained closed in contravention of the road map.

32. According to a report issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in July 2010, at least 242 Palestinian structures had been demolished in East Jerusalem and "Area C" of the West Bank in 2010. As a result, more than 1,100 Palestinians, including more than 400 children, had been forcibly displaced or otherwise affected owing to extensive damage of property or destruction of livelihood. In addition, there had been a marked increase in the number of stop-work and demolition orders being issued by Israel in Area C. As of August 2010, there were more than 3,000 outstanding demolition orders against Palestinian properties throughout Area C. Demolitions were carried out mainly

against structures that had been built without Israeli-issued building permits and were thus considered "illegal" by Israel. In Area C, more than 70 per cent of the land, currently allocated to Israeli settlements or the Israeli occupying forces, was unavailable for Palestinians, while severe restrictions applied to their use of an additional 29 per cent. Only 1 per cent of the land in Area C was thus available for Palestinian construction and development. In East Jerusalem, only 13 per cent of the land was currently zoned for Palestinian construction, compared to the 35 per cent allocated for Israeli settlements.

33. The reporting period was also marked by increased violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians. This included physical assault, harassment, intimidation, setting fire to or seizing agricultural land, uprooting or damaging olive trees and grape vines, the prevention of access, throwing stones at vehicles and houses, vandalizing mosques and cemeteries, shooting civilians and killing livestock. During the period, more than 300 incidents have taken place in which Israeli settlers caused either injury to Palestinian civilians, including children, or damage to Palestinian property. An Israeli settler was killed in a Palestinian shooting attack on his vehicle on 24 December 2009, and three Palestinian suspects were killed by an Israeli undercover unit two days later. On 14 May 2010, a Palestinian boy from the Ramallah area was shot and killed by Israeli settlers after he had thrown stones at their car. On 31 August, gunmen from the Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, opened fire at an Israeli car near Hebron, killing four settlers inside, including two women, one of whom was pregnant. The trend of particular concern was the so called "price tag" strategy by extreme settlers to protest the Israeli Government's policy of settlement restraint, whereby for every attempt by the Israeli authorities to dismantle a settlement outpost, settlers would attack Palestinian communities. Also, the lack of adequate law enforcement on settler violence remained an issue of serious concern. The Israeli human rights group, Yesh Din, reported that investigations into many incidents had been closed by the Israeli police for lack of evidence or owing to "unknown perpetrators".

34. Israel has continued the illegal construction of the wall in the West Bank, including in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, in defiance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as of July 2010, approximately 61.4 per cent of the 707-kilometre-long wall was complete, a further 8.4 per cent was under construction and 30.1 per cent was planned but not yet constructed. When completed, the majority of the route, approximately 85 per cent, will run inside the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, rather than along the Green Line. The total area located between the wall and the Green Line amounted to 9.4 per cent of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the "no man's land", resulting in the confiscation of vast tracts of Palestinian land and the displacement of thousands of Palestinian civilians, many of whom are now forced to acquire special permits from the occupying Power in order to remain in their own homes in and around those areas.

35. According to information made available by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in April 2010, more than 7,000 Palestinians, including 34 women and 270 children (44 under the age of 16), were held by Israel in 17 investigation and detention centres as well as prisons. Detainees were often deprived of medical treatment, and there were more than 1,500 cases of illness among the detainees, including heart problems, kidney failure and cancer. Israeli authorities deprived

these detainees of adequate medical treatment, and medication was often limited to pain killers only. Detainees were often subjected to isolated confinement and other forms of ill-treatment, resulting in psychological problems. Approximately 14 detainees had been subjected to isolated confinement for more than five years.

36. The Israeli occupation continued to gravely affect Palestinian women and children. In a report released in February 2010, the World Bank stated that, while men were the direct recipients of violence, women had also had to bear its indirect costs. For instance, although the overwhelming majority of Palestinians killed or imprisoned were men, women had to shoulder the responsibility of raising children and maintaining the household alone. In addition, for women, the Israeli military checkpoints represented spaces of humiliation and presented both physical and moral danger with gender-related consequences. The invasive search procedures presented a potential risk to women's honour. Families and communities often responded by censoring women's movements, in particular those of young unmarried women. The sense of humiliation and degree of affront to a woman's reputation was so great that families in Areas B and C even limited their girls' education rather than subject them to the perceived moral dangers of the checkpoints.

37. In Area C of the West Bank, schoolchildren face many obstacles, including restricted access to their schools, long walking distances, and substandard classrooms owing to the restrictive permit regime. In East Jerusalem, as of August 2010, over 7,000 Palestinian school-aged children were not enrolled in school because of Israeli policies requiring families to obtain permits proving residency in Jerusalem. In the Gaza Strip, 82 per cent of the damage caused to schools during Operation Cast Lead has still not been repaired, according to the United Nations Children's Fund. Moreover, the closure regime on Gaza has affected access to schools, seven of which were located within the restricted areas near the border with Israel. The safety of some 4,600 students and staff attending those institutions, the quality of education provided and the level of educational achievement have been seriously undermined by the frequent exposure to Israeli fire targeting people present in open areas.

38. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that access restrictions in the West Bank had exacerbated the acute water shortage affecting communities in Area C, particularly during the summer season, as a result of the lack of water infrastructure and previous years of drought. The water shortage has gradually eroded the herding livelihoods on which most of those communities rely. Humanitarian organizations seeking to address the needs of these vulnerable communities faced considerable challenges owing to the restrictive permit regime implemented by the Israeli authorities. The Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem reported that Israel held almost complete control of the mountain aquifer and exploited 80 per cent of the production for its needs. The discriminatory sharing of water resources has created a chronic water shortage in the West Bank, with potentially serious consequences for the health of Palestinians.

39. In the Gaza Strip, in the peak of the hot summer season, households' access to running water was severely limited owing to power shortages. According to the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, as of August 2010, 40 per cent of households in Gaza had access to running water for only six to eight hours per week, 30 per cent received water for only six hours once every five days, and the other 30 per cent

obtained water only once every two days. The quality of the running water was poor, forcing the population to rely extensively on tankered water for drinking.

40. Despite facing very difficult circumstances of the occupation, the Palestinian Authority has made significant progress in carrying out its two-year State-building plan led by Prime Minister Fayyad, entitled "Palestine: Ending the occupation, establishing the State", which was released in August 2009. The World Bank reported that the Palestinian Authority was making steady progress on implementing the programme and had strengthened its public financial management systems, improved service delivery, and made significant reforms to increase security and shore up its fiscal position. In the first half of 2010, the Palestinian economy has achieved real growth of 7 per cent. Most of the growth was in the West Bank, while Gaza continued to experience falling per capita gross domestic product. Sustainability of the growth, given the reliance on donor assistance, was a cause for concern. While private sector growth required a shift from public sector-driven investment to a real take-off in private sector investment and development and stabilization of the economy, the restrictions on movement and access to resources and markets imposed by the Government of Israel remained the largest impediment to private sector investment in the West Bank and Gaza. In August 2010, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recorded some 500 obstacles to movement in the West Bank.

41. In its progress report on the Fayyad Plan released in August, entitled "Homestretch to freedom", the Palestinian Authority stated that 34 new schools had been built and 23 had been expanded; 11 new clinics had been built and 30 expanded; 44 new housing projects had been started; 16 new roads had been built and 40 road improvement projects had been started; and 370,000 trees had been planted under the Greening Palestine project. Also, law and order had been improved: 88,000 court orders had been carried out by the police and a police station had been established in every major urban centre and in some other municipal centres. The Government had been able to increase revenues by 18 per cent, with an increase of 20 per cent in tax revenues.

42. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued to provide an extensive programme of emergency assistance and basic public services in Gaza and the West Bank. Despite the Israeli announcement regarding the intention to ease the Gaza blockade in July 2010, UNRWA has not been able to resume work on suspended major infrastructure projects, with the exception of three pilot projects intended to test the integrity of the supply chain. In May 2010, the Agency completed 60 years of operations amidst one of its most grave financial crises, which threatened its ability to continue its vital services for the refugee population. The Committee reiterates its appreciation for the dedicated services provided by UNRWA and calls upon all donors to increase contributions to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of vital services and the well-being of the 4.8 million registered refugees dependent on the Agency's assistance.

43. UNDP continued to respond to the destruction caused by the Israeli military attacks in the Gaza Strip of December 2008 to January 2009 by clearing and recycling debris, repairing damage to farming and fishing assets, providing social and economic assistance and coordinating early recovery efforts by various United Nations system entities. UNDP has affirmed its preparedness to restart the construction projects that have been suspended for three years if the reported

changes in Israel's closure regime occur. In the West Bank, UNDP is working with the Palestinian Authority to increase its administrative capacity and improve access to justice. It is also engaged in a range of infrastructure, environmental, social and economic initiatives to improve the conditions of the Palestinian people and the effectiveness of government.

44. The Committee remained appreciative of the important work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It noted that the consolidated appeal for 2010 focused on delivering humanitarian assistance, increased protection of civilians, enhanced monitoring and reporting on the humanitarian situation and the strengthening of United Nations humanitarian coordination structures.

Chapter V
Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/16

45. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and others.

1. Action taken in the General Assembly and the Security Council

Meetings of the Security Council

46. During the reporting period, the Security Council has continued to monitor the situation on the ground and the efforts to implement the road map. It held monthly briefings throughout the year under the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".

47. The Council held its 6201st meeting on 14 October 2009 to discuss the Goldstone report, at the request of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, supported by Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Syrian Arab Republic, on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. During the open debate, the Chair of the Committee made a statement (S/PV.6201).

48. The Council held its 6265th meeting on 27 January 2010. During an open debate following the monthly briefing, the Chair of the Committee delivered a statement (S/PV.6265).

49. The Council held its 6298th meeting on 14 April. During an open debate following the monthly briefing, the Vice-Chair of the Committee delivered a statement (S/PV.6298).

50. The Council held its 6363rd meeting on 21 July. During an open debate following the monthly briefing, the Chair of the Committee made a statement (S/PV.6363).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

51. On 15 December 2009, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on Israel's settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1142).

52. On 24 February 2010, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on Israel's announcement to include the Tomb of the Patriarchs (Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi) in Hebron and Rachel's Tomb (Masjid Bilal or Qubbat Rakhil) in Bethlehem in a list of Israel's "national heritage infrastructure" (GA/PAL/1151).

53. On 19 March, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on Israel's settlement expansion in East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1153).

54. On 31 August, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the resumption of negotiations on all permanent status issues (GA/PAL/1173).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 64/16 and 64/17

1. Committee meetings at Headquarters

55. At its periodic meetings at Headquarters in New York, the Committee, among other things, heard a presentation by a representative of the United Nations Environment Programme on an environmental assessment of the Gaza Strip following the Israeli military offensive, as well as a testimony by a participant in the Free Gaza flotilla. As a new initiative, the Committee also screened several documentary films on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

2. Programme of international meetings and conferences

56. Through its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee continued to raise international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

57. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee:

(a) International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, co-organized with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Qawra, Malta, 12 and 13 February 2010;

(b) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, United Nations Office at Vienna, 24 and 25 March;

(c) United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, United Nations Office at Vienna, 26 March;

(d) United Nations International Meeting in Support of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, Istanbul, 25 and 26 May;

(e) United Nations Public Forum in Support of the Palestinian People, Istanbul, 27 May;

(f) United Nations African Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Rabat, 1 and 2 July.

58. The above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the media. The reports of the meetings were issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and were made available through the "Question of Palestine" website maintained by the Division.

59. In Malta, on the sidelines of the International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, the Committee delegation was received by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, Tonio Borg. It also held a meeting with the Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs of the Maltese Parliament, Michael Frendo, and members of the Standing Committee.

60. During its stay in Vienna in connection with the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, the Committee delegation met with the Political Director, Ambassador Stefan Lehne, and the Director for the Middle East and North Africa, Minister Friedrich Stift, both of the Ministry for European and International Affairs of Austria.

61. In Istanbul, during its stay in connection with the United Nations International Meeting in Support of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, the Committee delegation was received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu.

62. In Rabat, on the sidelines of the United Nations African Meeting on the Question of Palestine, the Committee delegation met with President of the House of Representatives of Morocco, Abdelwahad Radi, and the President of the Moroccan House of Councillors, Mohamed Cheikh Biadillah.

3. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

63. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The Committee is appreciative of the active participation of their representatives in the various international events held under its auspices.

4. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

64. The Committee continued its cooperation with civil society organizations worldwide. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 30 November 2009. The meetings provided civil society representatives with an opportunity to discuss the situation on the ground and their programmes in support of the Palestinian people and to improve coordination of their activities. The Committee was appreciative of the work done by civil society organizations and encouraged them to continue contributing to efforts aimed at realizing a two-State solution.

65. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms cooperating with it, in addition to its established liaison with a large number of individual organizations. At the United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, held at the United Nations Office at Vienna in March, the deliberations focused on civil society actions against the separation wall and the importance of upholding international law, including with respect to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the wall. Meanwhile, the United Nations Public Forum in Support of the Palestinian People, held in May 2010 at the Istanbul Kültür University in Turkey, focused on Jerusalem. Over the past year, the Chair of the Committee met with representatives of civil society, including a delegation of Palestinian Christians.

66. During the reporting period, six civil society organizations have been accredited to the Committee.

67. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained a page on civil society and the question of Palestine (http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/ngo.htm) on the "Question of Palestine" website as a tool for the exchange of information and networking and for cooperation between civil society and the Committee.

68. The Division strived to enhance the use of information technology and created a Facebook "fan page", which has attracted more than 800 "fans" during the reporting period, informing about developments related to the question of Palestine and the work of the Committee. In addition, the Division continued to publish the periodic online bulletin "NGO Action News", in order to catalogue and publicize civil society initiatives.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

69. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. For the first time, it co-organized a meeting with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean. The meeting considered, in particular, the role of parliamentarians and inter-parliamentary organizations in supporting Israeli-Palestinian peace and promoting stability in the region. The four international events held during 2010 were addressed by parliamentarians from Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Malta, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

5. Research, monitoring and publications

70. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination, including through the Internet:

(a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;

(c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(d) Special bulletins and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;

(f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

6. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

71. Pursuant to successive annual General Assembly mandates, the Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop

the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the "Question of Palestine" website, which is located on the United Nations home page under "Peace and Security". This included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system to ensure the uninterrupted presence of UNISPAL (http://unispal.un.org) on the Internet and involved the expansion of the document collection to include relevant new and old United Nations system and related documents. In addition, steps continued to be taken to enhance the user-friendliness and usefulness of UNISPAL, including by incorporating additional multimedia content and RSS and Twitter feeds intended to alert users about newly posted materials. The Division has successfully launched the redesigned "Question of Palestine" portal.

7. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

72. Two staff members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division from September to December 2009, in conjunction with the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. The trainees familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other organs and conducted research on specific topics.

8. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

73. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at Headquarters and at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 30 November 2009, and at the United Nations Office at Vienna on 1 December. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a special meeting of the Committee and other activities, a cultural exhibit entitled "The United Nations and the Palestine refugees, 60 years later" was presented by UNRWA, in cooperation with the Permanent Mission of Luxembourg to the United Nations, under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee also sponsored a concert by Maqamat, an orchestra of the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music in Ramallah. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed by United Nations information centres and other bodies in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/18

74. The Department of Public Information, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/18, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine in order to raise the awareness of the international community on this question, as well as on the situation in the Middle East, in such a way as to contribute effectively to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process.

75. During the reporting period, the Department produced a total of 129 press releases on the question of Palestine in English and French, including summaries of formal meetings and press conferences, as well as statements and press releases by the Secretary-General and other United Nations officials.

76. UN Radio and the United Nations News Centre regularly covered the question of Palestine in the six official languages, as well as in Portuguese and Kiswahili. The Arabic Language Unit provided extensive coverage of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Interviews, press briefings and General Assembly and Security Council sessions were covered and posted on the UN Radio website. The English language version of the portal alone carried over 200 news stories devoted to the subject.

77. The Department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, organized the eighteenth International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, in Lisbon on 22 and 23 July 2010. Approximately 100 participants from Portugal, the Middle East and other parts of the world participated, including current and former policymakers, government officials, mayors, representatives of civil society, academia and journalists. The Seminar received both local and international media coverage.

78. The Department organized a training programme for 10 young Palestinian journalists at Headquarters, in Washington, D.C., and in Geneva from 2 November to 11 December 2009. The programme strengthened the participants' capacity as broadcast media professionals and included training to improve their skills in maintaining websites in Arabic.

79. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued to digitize documents for the UNISPAL document collection.

80. The network of United Nations information centres and services continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine and to organize special outreach activities. The information centres promoted the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and widely disseminated the messages of the Secretary-General in the official and non-official languages, including German, Greek, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese and Turkish. The United Nations Information Service in Vienna and the United Nations information centres in Ankara and Rabat provided communications support to the United Nations meetings held under the auspices of the Committee.

Chapter VII
Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

81. Throughout the reporting period, the Committee has continued to advocate a peaceful and just solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, through the establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. There is international consensus that such a solution would lead to the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as defined by the General Assembly, and the establishment of peace and security in the region. The Committee has reiterated that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land that started in 1967 remains the main obstacle towards the realization of that objective. The occupation has entailed the construction of settlements and the wall, the transfer of Israeli settlers and the annexation of Palestinian land, as well as the military oppression of the Palestinian civilian population, constituting violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and constant affronts to the human dignity of the Palestinian people and the economic and social fabric of the Palestinian society. The occupation, with all its consequences, not only subjugates the Palestinian people but also harms the social fabric of the Israeli society. The prolonged occupation has made the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution more difficult by creating almost irreversible facts on the ground. As a result, a majority of the Palestinian people have lost confidence in the political process with Israel.

82. The Committee has repeatedly expressed its utmost concern about the volatile situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in East Jerusalem, and the stagnation of the political process. The Committee remained firmly opposed to the continued illegal construction of settlements in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, accompanied by escalating settler violence. In addition, the construction of the separation wall has continued, leaving thousands of Palestinians cut off from access to their lands, families, schools and hospitals and isolating several communities in walled enclaves. The Committee is disturbed by the impunity with which Israel's legal obligations, as confirmed by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, have been flouted, and calls upon the international community to take the required action to ensure respect for, and compliance with, the ruling of the International Court of Justice, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

83. The Committee has been particularly alarmed by the situation in Occupied East Jerusalem, including the acceleration of settlement construction and expansion, the demolition of houses, the revocation of residency rights, the eviction of Palestinian citizens, settler extremism and the threats to Jerusalem's holy sites and historical heritage. Recent Israeli policy statements and actions by the municipal government in the City are not conducive to productive talks on the future of Jerusalem as the capital of two States. The Committee reiterates its position that Israel's dangerous and provocative policies in East Jerusalem are prone to spark negative reactions on the ground, in the region and by Muslims worldwide, leading to violence and even armed conflict. East Jerusalem is an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and a negotiated solution of the question of Jerusalem, based on international law, is

essential to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and crucial for a durable peace in the whole region. The Committee is encouraged that these concerns are widely shared by Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations, as well as by parliamentarians.

84. The Committee has persistently condemned the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, which prevents any reconstruction and sustained humanitarian assistance and which has caused the near collapse of the economy and social fabric of Gaza. That siege constitutes a severe form of collective punishment of the entire population of the Gaza Strip. The Committee has also denounced the firing of rockets and mortar rounds by Palestinian militants from Gaza and reiterated its call for the release of Israeli corporal Gilad Shalit. It urges Israel to open all of the Gaza Strip's border crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, import and export of commercial goods, including reconstruction materials, and movement of persons in accordance with international humanitarian law, the Agreement on Movement and Access of 15 November 2005 and Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).

85. The Committee continued to monitor the international investigations and their follow-up into the Israeli military offensive against Gaza of December 2008 to January 2009 and the Free Gaza flotilla incident of May 2010. It acknowledged the value of internal investigations on the national level. The report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, established by the Human Rights Council and led by Justice Richard Goldstone (A/HRC/12/48), represents a comprehensive, balanced and authoritative account of the 2008-2009 Israeli incursion into Gaza. While the Committee recognizes the value of the Israeli Government's recent examination of some of the specific allegations, it calls for a comprehensive, credible and independent investigation into the violations of international law committed and demands follow-up action. The Committee also took note of the report of the international fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council to investigate violations of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, resulting from the Israeli attacks on the flotilla of ships carrying humanitarian assistance (A/HRC/15/21). The results of those investigations will, without doubt, contribute to a strengthening of the rule and application of international humanitarian and human rights law in conflict situations. The Committee appeals to all the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to fulfil their obligations in accordance with common Article 1, which obligates them to respect and to ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances.

86. The Committee welcomed the resumption of the direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians on all permanent status issues and notes the important role played by the United States, Egypt and Jordan. The agreement by the Palestinian leadership to direct talks, despite Israel's lack of compliance with its road map obligations, testifies to the full commitment of the Palestine Liberation Organization to a peaceful solution of the conflict and should be met by a genuine commitment of the Israeli Government to the two-State solution, bolstered by tangible improvements of the situation on the ground. The Committee is of the view that the talks can only succeed if they are conducted in an atmosphere of trust and goodwill. In that regard, the Committee joins the rest of the international community in expressing deep regret at the non-extension of the Israeli moratorium on settlement construction, which called

into question the continuation of the negotiations. It is crucial that the negotiations are based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative. The direct involvement in the negotiations of regional partners is vitally important. The continued support by the international community, in particular by the Quartet and its individual members, is key to moving forward the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on all permanent status issues. The Committee will closely follow the developments and offer constructive support in the interest of resolving the question of Palestine and the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

87. **The negotiations should be buttressed by a parallel process of Palestinian State-building in implementation of the strategic plan of the Palestinian Authority. The Committee will back those efforts by advocating sustained and generous donor commitment, highlighting the actual needs on the ground and providing the Palestinian Authority with the opportunity to present its assessment to the wider international community.**

88. **The Committee remains concerned that the divisions among the Palestinian factions profoundly affect the legitimate Palestinian national aspirations for statehood and peace. It calls for invigorated efforts by all to help reconcile their positions on the basis of the prevailing consensus on the need to achieve the two-State solution, which would lead to the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.**

89. **The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights will continue through their mandated activities to generate heightened international awareness of the current challenges for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. In this connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful and constructive contribution of the Division in support of its mandate aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support of the international community for its programme objectives, for instance, in terms of both participation at the meetings convened and the use of printed and electronic information materials provided by the Division; (b) the continued involvement of parliamentarians and civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine; and (c) the increased international awareness of the United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine as indicated by the growing number of documents and relevant information materials on the issue accessed by users worldwide at the websites maintained by the Division. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority carried out by the Division has proved its usefulness as it directly contributes to Palestinian capacity-building efforts. The Committee strongly recommends that this important mandated activity be continued and, where possible, enhanced.**

90. **The Committee will focus its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2011, implemented by the Division, on widening international support for the permanent status negotiations and on contributing to the creation of a favourable international atmosphere for their conduct in good faith. The Committee intends to mobilize increased international scrutiny of the developments on the ground, in particular the halt of all settlement activities in**

the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and an end to all other illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It will support global campaigns to challenge Israeli impunity and promote the concept of Israeli accountability for its actions towards the Palestinian people. It will pay special attention to highlighting the plight of the most disadvantaged Palestinians, such as the Palestine refugees, the Palestinians living in Gaza and Palestinian political prisoners. The Committee will continue to mobilize support for the Palestinian institution-building plan and all other efforts to facilitate the independence and viability of the Palestinian State. It will reach out to and engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society to mobilize support for a just solution of the conflict. The Committee wishes to contribute to efforts towards ending incitement on both sides, provide a venue to have the narratives heard and reconciled and, with the help of civil society, to promote peace education. It will pay particular attention to the inclusion and empowerment of women and their organizations in this process.

91. The Committee highly values civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people. It lauds the courageous advocacy actions of countless activists, including eminent personalities and parliamentarians, who participate in demonstrations against the wall, try to break the siege of Gaza and keep their home constituencies informed about the harsh realities of life under occupation. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including that of the Committee, on the question of Palestine. It will continue to assess its programme of cooperation with civil society and consult them on ways to enhance their contribution. The Committee appreciates the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening cooperation with civil society.

92. The Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. Parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that their Governments actively promote and support the realization of the two-State solution and ensure respect for international law, in accordance with their international obligations.

93. The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support; the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities. The Division should pay special attention to continued development of the "Question of Palestine" portal and to explore new technologies and media, including Web-based social information networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. The Division should also continue to develop the UNISPAL document collection. The Division should further develop the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority paying special attention to the programme's gender balance, and organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

94. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. The Committee requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

95. **Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.**

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